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BENT RIM BUGLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHIGAN MOUNTAIN BIKING ASSOCIATION



-
- Mountain Bike Patrol
 - Chapter Chatter
 - 2010 Annual Meeting & MMBA Expo
 - MMBA Volunteer Of The Year
-



IN THE PEDALTARIAN PARADISE OF PORTLAND, OREGON, PEOPLE WANT AFFORDABLE COMMUTER BIKES THAT RIP. KONA FACTORY TEAM RIDER AND SELLWOOD CYCLE OWNER ERIK TONKIN TOLD US SO. WE'VE BUILT HIM A FRAME IN THE PAST, BUT THIS YEAR HE GETS THE FULL RIDE. CHROMOLY FRAME, DURA-ACE DOWNTUBE SHIFTERS, CITY SPEED COME TO LIFE. GET DOWN WITH THE NEW

2010 HONKY TONK

KONA
KONAWORLD.COM

The Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA) is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization. We have 1,600 members in nine chapters throughout Michigan. The mission of the MMBA is to promote responsible mountain biking and to work toward the goals of common land access and natural resource protection through interaction with policy makers, the cycling industry, race promoters, mountain bikers and other trail users. The Bent Rim Bugle is published four times a year by the Michigan Mountain Biking Association and distributed to all members. It is made possible by volunteers and riders like you.

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BENT RIM BUGLE

BRB Information

The MMBA's *Bent Rim Bugle* (BRB) began in 1990 with the formation of the organization. Back then the Michigan DNR was on the verge of closing all state land to mountain bikes. The BRB was the means for organizing the state's off-road cyclists to work for continued access.

The BRB still carries the torch for off road advocacy and is the official newsletter of the MMBA. Published quarterly, the BRB keeps the MMBA membership up to date with events and advocacy issues throughout the state.

Contributions, Stories, Photos

If it's about mountain biking, please send it in. Electronic submissions should go to brb@mmba.org. We prefer documents in Microsoft Word, or simple text. Photos should be in jpg format and at least 300 dpi.

Advertise in the BRB

The Bent Rim Bugle offers inexpensive and targeted advertising which helps with the cost of producing this cool newsletter. Contact us at brb@mmba.org for more info and ad rates.

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SPRING 2010 | ISSUE NO. 88

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pg 4 - MTB Patrol
Pg 5 - 2010 Schedule
Pg 7 - Chapter Chatter
Pg 12 - Volunteer Of The Year
Pg 16 - Celebrating 20 years
Pg 19 - Expo Wrap Up
Pg 21 - Precious Spot
Pg 23 - Rescue A Bike



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Mountain Bike Patrol Update

By Shawn Murphy and Jon Rose

We had a great time at the MMBA Expo. We always enjoy the chance to introduce the group to the community. The venue was great and the indoor pump track added a lot of fun. We want to thank Nate Sefcik, Dennis Gustafson, and Scott Keller for the helping with the table at the Expo. We couldn't have done it without you.

For those of you that missed our booth, here is an overview of what we do. The Michigan Mountain Bike Patrol is a volunteer organization. We have first aid and CPR training. Our objectives are to assist, educate, and inform. In other words, we always offer help, give advice—such as how to ride without damaging the trail, and provide feedback to agencies and groups as needed. We are also the face of mountain bikers to other trail users and land managers. Look for us at the CPS races because we also help with those.

The MMBP covers the entire state of Michigan, has over twenty volunteers, and are always grateful for new mountain bike patrollers. Many visitors at this year's expo signed up to learn more about the patrol and to volunteer as a patroller. We will send more information to everyone who signed up by mid-February. Please e-mail bikepatrol@mmba.org if you do not receive any information or if you are interesting in learning more about the Michigan Mountain Bike Patrol.



*MMBP Volunteer of the Year, Jean Steinberg, and MMBP Co-Director, Shawn Murphy.
Photo: Jon Rose*

Mark your calendar for the MMBP class on April 10, which will be held at the Rochester Mills Brewing Company at 12:00 p.m. There will be some inside session work, and then we will ride to Stony Creek for field training. We are still making arrangements for first aid and CPR training, which may occur on a different day.

Jean Steinburg is the MMBP Volunteer of the Year. She has been instrumental in gaining acceptance for a state-wide release form for the mountain bike patrollers. Otherwise, they would need to sign releases for every park in which they provide MMBP services. Jean put in a lot of time to make this happen.

Thanks to all patrollers this year. Everyone did a great job! We are looking forward to 2010 and meeting our newest patrollers at the April 10 training session. These volunteers are important for improving the image of Michigan mountain bikers. See you on the trails!



May

2010 Schedule of Events

- 2 Ft. Custer Stampede (CPS)
- 5-8 IMBA World Summit
- 8 Island Lake Recreation Area Demo Day
Hare Racer MTB Race, Heritage Park, Adrian
- 15 Trail Day, Clinton River Park, Sterling Heights
Trail Day, Proud Lake
- 19 Ride of Silence
- 22 Trail Day, Ft. Custer
- 26 Cycling Advocacy Day in Lansing
- 29 Bloomer Park (CPS)

June

- 5 Milford Trail Challenge
- 6 Hanson Hills Challenge (CPS)
- 11-13 Addison Oaks Camping Event hosted by Metro North
- 12 BARF at the Farm, Lakeshore Park
- 14 Metro South Chapter Meeting
- 26 State Games of Michigan, Cannonsburg Ski Area
Trail Day, Ft. Custer

July

- 10 Boyne Marathon (CPS)
- 13 Metro North Chapter Meeting
- 17-23 Tree Farm Relay Preparation Days, Lakeshore Park
- 24 Tree Farm Relay, Lakeshore Park
Trail Day, Ft. Custer
- 25 Stony Creek Time Trial (CPS)

August

- 14-20 Maybury CPS Race Preparation Days
- 21 Maybury Chapter Benefit Race (CPS)
Trail Day, Ft. Custer

September

- 10-12 Midwest Mountain Bike Summit
- 12 Addison Oaks Fall Classic (CPS)
- 13 Metro South Chapter Meeting
- 25 Trail Day, Ft. Custer
- 26 Pando Challenge (CPS)

October

- 2 Take a Kid Mountain Biking, Lakeshore Park
- 5 Metro North Chapter Meeting
- 16 Massive Fallout
Trail Day, Ft. Custer

November

- 17 Bike the Lights, Hines Drive, Westland

December

- 13 Metro South Chapter Meeting

This is a general listing of confirmed events. Check the MMBA website (www.mmba.org) and forums for event details, rain dates, and other changes or updates.

The State Games Of Michigan

The State Games of Michigan will be held on June 26, 2010. Along with 31 other states, Michigan holds its own State Olympics. Mountain biking, which will be hosted by the Western Chapter, is one of seventeen sports that will be featured.

For more information, visit www.stategamesofmichigan.com

Athletes of all levels are invited to compete in the beginner, sport, expert, elite, or pro categories. There will be cross country and downhill events. Participants will get a free t-shirt and admission to the opening ceremonies at Van Andel Arena, as well the opportunity to march in the Parade of Athletes and enjoy indoor fireworks and athletic entertainment.

Podium winners will be eligible to compete at the National Games in San Diego. Registration is \$35 for adults, \$25 for juniors (15-18) and \$20 for youth (14 and under).

Online registration is open now!

Visit:

www.stategamesofmichigan.com/sports/mountain-biking/registration



10th Annual Midwest Mountain Bike Summit

Grand Rapids, MI / September 9-12, 2010

The 10th Annual Midwest Mountain Bike Summit will be held at the Grand Rapids Bike Park, this fall. The new bike facility will feature a dual lane pump track, dirt jumps, a skills area, and a flow trail.

Founders Brewing is once again the title sponsor. The three-day event includes the welcome reception on Thursday evening, and all of the classes and clinics offered on Friday and Saturday. The Sunday Epic Ride will be on the trefecta and Cruiser Class BMX will be held at the Bike Park.

Visit: www.midwestmtbsummit.com



Chapter Chatter

Metro North

By Jon Rose, Chapter President

What a great turnout we had! I would like to thank all of the volunteers and support staff who showed up to make this event a blast! Metro North was able to bring its brand new tool trailer to this year's expo. Peter Kresmary's fanatics designed inside storage houses for shovels, rakes, McLeods, a weed whip, a grill, and much more. This trailer is the pride and joy of Metro North and will only get better. Future plans include adding a tiller, a power rake, and possibly even a blower!

We announced Pete Kresmary as our 2009 Volunteer of the Year at the expo. Pete logged over 140 hours of trail work in 2009 and is a key member the team! Thank you, Pete. Your hard work and effort help to make thousands of riders enjoy mountain biking even more.

At the expo, people milled about the Metro North booth checking out Matt D's videos and the display for our newest trail in Sterling Heights, the Clinton River Park Trail. Special thanks go out to Sgt. Aaron Burgess for his efforts building this trail, designing the display, and getting so much press coverage for this trail. Speaking of press, Aaron has accepted my request to become our first Media and Public Relations Director, which may be a first for any chapter in the MMBA.

Aaron will work with Metro North chapter officers and trail coordinators to create press releases and send them to local newspapers. We plan to use press releases and membership tables at each of our trail days to ramp up membership in 2010.

I am confident and excited that Aaron will get us a significant amount of press coverage this year. Come out to a trail day for a chance to get your picture in the local papers.



New Metro North Trails

We have some challenges this year including building a new trail from scratch in Columbus, which is northeast of Richmond, and adding mileage and boardwalks to the Clinton River Trails. Both of these projects will require lots of volunteer help; however, once completed, these two trails will give local residents the opportunity to mountain bike without traveling 30 minutes or more just to get to a trail. Keep your eyes on the Metro North forum at <http://www.mmba.org/forum> for trail dates and more information about these two projects.

2010 Metro North Chapter Board

I would like to take a moment to congratulate the newly-elected officers of the Metro North Chapter for 2010:

President Jonathon Rose
Vice President Mike Moss
Secretary Marty Shue
Treasurer Jody Delavern
Board Representative Nick Shue

As a team, we are working hard to plan, organize, and have fun in the upcoming 2010 riding season, but we cannot do anything without you, our membership. You are the wheel that keeps the machine rolling. Your efforts help to build and expand the sport we all love. Thank you, Metro North membership, for your time, monetary support, and hard work building and riding our trails! I look forward to seeing you "on the dirt!"

Chapter Chatter

Metro South

By Claudia Bean, Chapter President

Hello MMBA Members!

The Metro South Chapter is off to a great start in 2010. The Expo turned out to be awesome. We hope you stopped by the Metro South booth to say hello and enjoy the home baked cookies.

The FAFL winners were also able to pick up their FAFL gifts at the expo. If you were not able to pick up your FAFL gift at the booth, the gifts will be available at our upcoming chapter meeting. They will also be available at the various trail days and events. If you cannot attend the chapter meeting or the trail days to pick up your award, e-mail us at metrosouth@mmba.org and we'll make other arrangements.

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

2009 Metro South FAFL Award Winners

Altmann, James
 Applegate, Justin
 Applegate, Tina
 Barrett, Krystil
 Bean, Frank
 Bean, Claudia
 Brown, Terry
 Bushore, Matt
 Calhoun, Leslie
 Claar, Adam
 Connolly, Mike
 Cox, Dave
 Cox, Wendy
 Dannefel, Tara
 Dughi, Matt
 Elkow-Moore, Lynn
 Foy, Joe
 Frey, Chris
 Frisbee, Beverly
 Frisbee, Eric
 Frisbee, Ray
 Hermann, Bill
 Johnson, Terrie
 Konkus, Loren
 Lapinski, Joe
 MacMillan, Bob
 Martin, Mark
 Moore, Haley
 Nevedal, Andrea
 Nowicki, Steve
 Pence, Jared
 Petts, Karen
 Petts, Kevin
 Petts, Russ
 Piling, Amanda
 Quay, Kerri
 Riehl, Pam
 Shotwell, Jeff
 Skorupski, Norbert
 Skulley, Mike
 Slabach, Tim
 Spleet, Bob
 Steinberg, Jean
 Steinberg, Steve
 Strozeski, Mike
 Thomas, Brian
 Thompson, Dave
 Weak, Gary
 Woodward, Jason
 Zimmerman, Sherri



Metro South Continued

Special congratulations go to the Metro South Chapter FAFL award winner for 2009, Jean Steinberg. For those of you who've been at trail days, at the Take a Kid/Family Mountain Biking events, or who have seen Jean wearing her Mountain Bike Patrol gear know how much she has done for our chapter this past year. She also won the Mountain Patrol Volunteer of the Year. So, I'd say we are in good hands riding with Jean! Thanks, Jean!!!



Metro South Trail Coordinators

Please acknowledge the great group of volunteers who are the trail coordinators at the Metro South Chapter trails:

Trails

Hickory Glen/Commerce
 Highland Recreation Area
 Island Lake Recreation Area
 Lakeshore Park/Novi
 Maybury State Park
 Milford Park
 Munson Park
 Proud Lake Recreation Area
 Rouge City Park

Trail Coordinators & Co-Assistant TCs

Justin Applegate and Jeff Shotwel
 Bob Spleet; Co/Asst TC- Open
 David Thompson; Co/Asst TC- Open
 David Cox and Loren Konkus
 Mike Flack; Co/Asst TC - Open
 Bill Hermann; Co/Asst TC - Open
 Scoot Goocher; Co/Asst TC - Open
 Bill Hermann; Co/Asst TC - Open
 Chris Frey and Jason Friedmann

Thanks for being the backbone of the MMBA, Trail Coordinators!

As you can see, we currently have six immediate openings for Co TCs, or Assistant TCs, at several of our trails. If you can help the chapter and our current, hard-working TCs by stepping up to volunteer for one of these available positions, e-mail us at metrosouth@mmba.org. Trail work season is just around the corner!

Speaking of trail days, please refer to the Calendar of Events section in this BRB for upcoming trail days. Mark your calendars now! We will have the grill to cook lunch for the volunteers after the work day.

Most trail days are in April; however, a few will be held in May for the Milford Challenge Preparation days, and several trail days will be held for special projects at Highland. Check the bulletin board for updates on our trail days.

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)



Lastly, we'd like to introduce the Metro South Chapter Board Members for 2010.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| President Claudia Bean | | Forum/Bulletin Board Name: froggyrider |
| | Profession | Coordinator, International Recruiting, Eastern Michigan University |
| | MMBA member for | 10 years |
| | Mountain biking for | 10 years |
| | Current number of bikes | That are rideable: seven. Redline Monocog single speed steel rigid, Vassago Bandersnatch 29er, Titus Racer X full suspension, Gazelle Women's Pub Crawl bike, Felt road bike, Giant Rainier used as winter bike, Specialized Expedition grocery store bike. |
| | First trail ridden | Island Lake |
| | First mountain bike | Giant Rainier hardtail |
| | Best bike vacation | Rode a bike across Michigan for a week on a brewery pub crawl with my husband |
| | Riding style | Cross country, urban, touring, and pub crawls |
| | Biggest biking accomplishment | Completing a series of 12/24 hour races to win second place women solo in 2007 |
| | Favorite Chapter trail | Lakeshore Park, Novi |
| | Favorite Michigan trail | The Poto |
| | Best crash | Riding Stony Creek backwards at night and getting clotheslined by a tree branch |
| | Worst crash | Tore my ACL at Ray's while "just riding along..." |
| | When I'm not riding a bike I... | Am doing bike clothing laundry |
| | When I am on the bike trainer, I listen to... | Gospel - Techno Dance music |
| | Favorite beer to have after a ride | Bell's Two Hearted Ale |

| Vice President Dave Cox | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Profession | Graphic Designer |
| MMBA member for | 8 years |
| Mountain biking for | 10+ years |
| Current number of bikes | That are rideable: six. Gunnar 29er, Surly 1x1, Titus Moto-Lite full suspension, Surly Cross Check, Atomlab Trail Pimp, 40s era Murray Pub Crawl Clunker. |
| First trail ridden | Maybury |
| First mountain bike | Trek Mountain 800 |
| Best bike vacation | Any time I'm in the UP for Ore to Shore |
| Riding style | Cross country |

Vice President Dave Cox - continued

| | |
|---|--|
| Biggest biking accomplishment | My first and only 12-hour race |
| Favorite Chapter trail | Sentimental favorite is Lakeshore Park, but if I only had one trail to ride it would be Highland |
| Favorite Michigan trail | Some of the Mt. Marquette Trails |
| Best crash | Too many to count! |
| Worst crash | Um, no comment... |
| When I'm not riding a bike I... | am playing guitar or painting. Yeah, and working too. |
| Favorite beer to have after a ride | Any Michigan-brewed hoppy beer |

Secretary Wendy Cox

| | |
|--|--|
| Profession | Substance Abuse Counselor |
| MMBA member for | 8 |
| Mountain biking for | 8 |
| Current number of bikes | That are rideable: three. Turner Flux, Gunner, Felt road bike |
| First trail ridden | Maybury |
| First mountain bike | Trek |
| Best bike vacation | Ore to Shore every year with my friends |
| Riding style | Cross country |
| Favorite Chapter trail | Lakeshore Park, Novi |
| Favorite Michigan trail | Pontiac Lake |
| Best crash | At Poto getting caught up in the sand and flying over the bars, and yet still managing to ride out and finish the trail. |
| When I'm not riding a bike I... | trying out new recipes. |

Treasurer Amanda Pilling

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| MMBA member for | 5 |
| Mountain biking for | 5 |
| Current number of bikes | That are rideable: five. Kona Stab DH, Kona Coil Air, Kona Cowan, Kona Unit SS, Kona Leroi XC |
| First trail ridden | Highland...in January |
| First mountain bike | Gary Fisher Sugar |
| Best bike vacation | Team trip to Pisgah National Forest, NC. This is where I learned to ride. |
| Riding style | Gravity, anyone? Downhill, dual slalom and some XC for kicks |
| Biggest biking accomplishment | Super D National Title 2006, Downhill National Title 2008 |
| Favorite Chapter trail | Maybury |

Treasurer Amanda Pilling - continued

| | |
|--|---|
| Favorite Michigan trail | The Poto |
| Best crash | Rag-dolled down the waterfall section at the US Open finally skidding to a stop behind my teammate, and laughing so hard that the course marshal thought I was seriously injured. |
| Worst crash | Still flying under the safety-umbrella...keeping my fingers crossed. |
| When I'm not riding a bike I... | am contemplating methylation patterns in DNA. |
| When I am on the bike trainer, I listen to... | The trainer? Are you kidding me? |
| Favorite beer to have after a ride | Fat Tire |
| Favorite beer after a win | Coors light: cold as the Rockies. |

State Board Representative Dave Thompson & ILRA Trail Coordinator

| | |
|--|---|
| Profession | IT Solutions Architect |
| MMBA member for | 7 |
| Mountain biking for | 7 |
| Current number of bikes | That are rideable: five. Vassago Bandersnatch 1x9, Specialized Hardrock Pro, Surly 1x1, Atomlab TrailPimp2, Schwinn Corvette (1956) - still waiting for its maiden pub crawl. |
| First trail ridden | Maybury |
| First mountain bike | 2004 Specialized Hardrock |
| Best bike vacation | Bitterroot Valley, Montana |
| Riding style | Cross country with a bit of freeride |
| Biggest biking accomplishment | Ore to Shore Hard Rock in under four hours |
| Favorite Chapter trail | ILRA |
| Favorite Michigan trail | ILRA |
| Best crash | Getting my bell rung at Ithaca in 2009 |
| Worst crash | October 2008 night ride at ILRA...you may already know the story. |
| When I'm not riding a bike I... | remodeling. |
| When I am on the bike trainer, I... | watch TV. |
| Favorite beer to have after a ride | Bell's Amber |

Chapter Chatter

Mid-State

By Andrea Davis, Mid-State Secretary

Waverly Hills Short Track

Spectacular Recap

Fifteen riders braved the cold on January 31 prior to the MMBA Expo to embrace the challenge of the Waverly Hills Snowy Short Track Spectacular. The A-wave took off first, with the Class B riders right behind them. A-racers completed five laps compared to the B wave's four. The 1.2-mile course meandered through an abandoned golf course before climbing a sledding hill.

As a last-minute surprise, expo guest speaker and six-time Leadville 100 winner Dave Wiens showed up to race. Wiens came in second place, beaten out of first by Jesse Gould. Even braver were the spectators who toughed it out until the very last racer crossed the finish line. Thanks to everyone who came out to support our chapter!

Burchfield Update

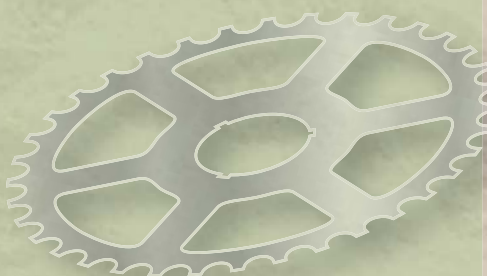
An 18-hole championship disc golf course is being built at Burchfield near Enter Sandman. Construction on the course will begin in the spring as soon as the county roads are open to moving heavy equipment. It should be finished by mid-July, but play won't be allowed on the course until later in the summer or fall.

Bikers are asked to stay off of Enter Sandman during construction. A snow fence will be put up, routing all riders back into the woods, rather than continuing to Enter Sandman.

Burchfield Trail Coordinator Jeff Popard is currently seeking input for the rebuilding of Enter Sandman, which will take place after the disc golf course construction has been completed.

This will allow us to add new features and even slightly increase the trail mileage.

Negotiations are also underway to get the park's approval for more single-track construction between Riverbend and McNamara as an alternative to the flat, multi-use section that goes through the field.



Chapter Chatter

South West

By Mike Needham

The experiment must end. For several years now, the Fort Custer trail system has been shared with equestrians. Without approval by the district or state level, the former park manager granted unrestricted use of all of the trails to equestrians. Our chapter tried very hard to accommodate this policy.

Meetings were held between the Fort Custer user groups. Local MDNR always asked for limited participation from our group, the mountain bikers. This was probably an effort to prevent another meeting like the one in Waterford, a few years back, where thousands of mountain bikers overflowed the facility to be heard on the subject of the Pontiac Lake trails.

Every Friends of Fort Custer meeting was attended by at least twice as many horsemen, making discussion difficult. The horse user group has become stubborn, unwilling to understand or respect any other users opinion, and unwilling to respect the land itself. This group is the Fort Custer Horse Friends (FCHF).

- The FCHF are unwilling to budge.
- They will not respect the trails and other users by staying off of muddy or soft trails.
- They don't care what they leave behind citing that, "It's natural."
- They don't care what they do to the land. It doesn't bother the horses.
- They won't obey park policy and keep the parking lots clean.
- They spread weed seed along trails leaving invaders like garlic mustard along the way.

(CONTIUED ON NEXT PAGE)

South West Continued:

A deer hunter, who was staying in cabin A, drove a 4x4 pickup truck over the bridge breaking one of three timbers underneath. I was asked if the chapter could supply new decking for the bridge. The present deck is 2x6x6-foot, treated lumber and good as new. "Why would the bridge need to be eight feet wide?" I asked. Their reply was that they intended to bring horse and buggy rigs to the trails. Is the Fort Custer DNR in on this? Yes! Should the chapter build a bridge for a user group that threatens to ruin all we've accomplished? Not while I'm president.

Communication with the FCHF has ceased. The web site we furnished for them has been shut down. Our attempt to reestablish dialog has stalled due to the continuing stubbornness of the FCHF president.

When only a few horses first used trails created for mountain biking, the impact was minimal. As more and more horses travel the trails, the impact becomes more significant. It is time to recognize that this experiment in sharing the trails is not working. It is time for the chapter to seek a remedy.

Chapter Chatter

Western Chapter

By Jason Dew

Chapter Board

President Jason Dew
Vice President Martin Hall
Treasurer Dave Staublin
Secretary Jason Scwabe

The State Games of Michigan mountain bike races will be held June 26 at Cannonsburg Ski area. The format consists of an XC race and a DH race. More information can be found at <http://www.stategamesofmichigan.com>. State Games of Michigan winners can race at the National State Games the following year.

The Midwest Mountain Bike Summit will be held in Grand Rapids at the Grand Rapids Bike Park from September 9–12. We will have advocacy speakers, mechanical trail building instruction, local beer, local food, live music, camping on site, and nothing short of a good time. A BMX track, dirt jumps, a dual lane pump track, a skills area, and short course XC racing loop of over a mile will be available on site. Construction of the Cannonsburg Ski Area's skills park and the 9-mile cross country loops were completed last season.

Construction of the Grand Rapids Bike Park has continued through the winter. Jason Wells, an IMBA trail builder, joined us for a week in January to help design and build the pump track. It will be open and ready to ride this spring.

The Western Chapter has been approached by two local parks departments about building trails in the city parks. We are actively working on the

Volunteer of the Year:

Bob Eckhardt

By Diane Ursu

Bob Eckhardt was awarded the MMBA Volunteer of the Year award at this year's expo. Bob became the State Board Treasurer in 2008 and has been a key player in updating old policies and implementing new policies at the state level in order to protect the interests of the organization, and allow the local chapters to build trails without worrying about the administrative tasks of the organization.

Bob is a true gentleman and a good man to work with. In this [online] interview, he talks about the MMBA, his mountain bike habit, and how he got Dave Wiens to come to this year's expo.

Di: First of all, I'd like to say congratulations for being the MMBA's Volunteer of the Year. While those of us who volunteer at the state level are very familiar with what you do for the organization, many of our members are not familiar with what you do as our treasurer. What are some of the projects that you have been working on over the last year?

Bob: In 2009, we implemented new policies to improve financial accountability in the organization and changed insurance companies because the old company was no longer able to insure the trail work performed by MMBA volunteers. The change in insurance programs required the Board and Treasurer to thoroughly review both our insurance coverage and legal structure to assure that volunteers and officers have the proper liability protection.



Bob Eckhardt (left) invited Dave Wiens (right) to speak at the Annual Meeting & Expo. Photo: Diane Ursu

The change in insurance programs required the Board and Treasurer to thoroughly review both our insurance coverage and legal structure to assure that volunteers and officers have the proper liability protection. We implemented the "must do" actions in 2009 such as removing teeter-totters that were no longer covered, and will complete several additional actions in 2010.

Di: How would you like to improve the organization?

Bob: First, I would like to say I believe the MMBA does a great job representing the interests of mountain bikers in Michigan. We are successful because we have a large number of very committed volunteers who truly care about the sport and improving trails in Michigan.

Improvements I would like to see include broader outreach in the Mountain Kids program and growth of Steve Kinley's effort to bring mountain bike racing into high school

athletics in Michigan. I would also like to see each Chapter sponsor [show up to] at least one state-wide, major event each year like the Triple Trail Challenge, High Country Pathway IMBA epic ride, or film festival. That would give us a good reason to leave the home trails a few weekends a year, meet some new people and see some new territory.

Di: How long have you been with the MMBA and when did you become our treasurer?

Bob: I started mountain biking in 1994 and joined the MMBA the same year. I was appointed Treasurer in the fall of 2008 replacing Joe Solecki, who left the state finances in great shape!

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

“We have over 600 miles of outstanding trails in Michigan because of the dedicated efforts of the volunteers of the MMBA.”

-Bob Eckhardt



Continued / Bob Eckhardt

Di: When did you start mountain biking and what got you into the sport? Do you race?

Bob: I got into the sport in 1994 because I needed to find an alternative to whitewater kayaking. I race a few times a year in point-to-point races like Iceman and Ore-to-Share where I am a middle of the pack racer in the old men's 60-64 group. I enjoy racing because it gives me another good reason to ride.

Di: What is your favorite trail in Michigan? What do you like about it?

Bob: My favorite trails are those that take you cross country rather than doing tight loops through the woods; so I like Poto near Ann Arbor, NCT segments on the west side, and Marquette trails in the UP. I haven't ridden Copper Harbor yet, but that is on the agenda this year after the Ore to Shore race.

Di: What kind of bike(s) do you have?

Bob: My mountain bike ride is a Gary Fisher HiFi Deluxe 29er upgraded with a 1,600 gram American Classic wheel set. Sweet! The road bike is a Specialized Roubaix Carbon frame cobbled together with miscellaneous Ultegra and Dura Ace parts from the basement junk box.

Di: How did you get Dave Wiens to speak at the expo? Has he done this very much?

Bob: I just emailed him and followed up with phone calls. The initial contact was a little difficult because I tried to reach him in October when he was doing the Lance Armstrong Foundation Ride for the Roses and designing a 12-mile mountain bike race course on Lance's ranch. Anyway, we finally connected. I just can't say enough good things about Dave – he is such a terrific representative for our sport!! He said he was booked every weekend in February as a volunteer or guest at different charity events, mostly on the West Coast.

Di: Is there anything else you would like to share with the MMBA members?

Bob: Yes. We have over 600 miles of outstanding trails in Michigan because of the dedicated efforts of the volunteers of the MMBA. If you know someone who rides, and is not a member, ask them to join at <http://www.mmba.org>. We need their support!



The MMBA Celebrates Its 20th Year

By Diane Ursu

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association. To this day, mountain bikers work together to build sustainable trail, maintain fair access to public lands, and get together to do what mountain bikers do best: have fun and socialize.

The Birth of an Organization

Mountain biking advocacy started long before the incorporation of the MMBA in 1990. It may seem somewhat ironic that mountain biking advocacy in Michigan would have such an impact on advocacy efforts all over the country. After all, there is no shortage of public land in Michigan.

In the late 1980s, mountain biking began to rapidly grow throughout Michigan. The number of mountain bikers greatly increased on trails and land managers began to worry about managing this user group. Lee Green, M.D., recalled in the MMBA forums in 2005 that the DNR Parks Division Chief signed an "emergency order" to ban mountain biking from state parks, but not other state land such as forests and game areas. It was speculated that this was not the general position of the DNR, but possibly the result of pressure from another advocacy group in Michigan.



Trail workers enjoy lunch after clearing trail at Luton Park in Rockford. The Western Chapter worked with the land manager to obtain access to this park. Photo: Diane Ursu

The mountain biking ban spurred the formation of several groups across Michigan who put pressure on their legislators to remove the ban. One of the groups that formed was the Potawatomi Mountain Biking Association (PMBA). According to Jason Jones, who has filled many roles within the MMBA on the state and local levels, the group formed around 1989 and was largely responsible for opening trail networks near their area.

"Access was eventually granted at Pinckney and things evolved at ILRA largely due to Dennis Hansen," Jason said. "Waterloo never happened because the land manager at the time was staunchly opposed to bikes. Brighton access wasn't an immediate focus and happened later as well. Tom Nell is largely responsible for getting PLRA accessible, I believe."

At about the same time, Dwain Abramowski, MMBA cofounder and former President and Executive Director from 1990 to 2000, was working with a group in Western Michigan and started printing the Bent Rim Bugle. Dwain's group and PMBA learned about each other and decided to work together to fight the same battle.

For the MMBA's 15th anniversary, Dwain Abramowski wrote an article for the Bent Rim Bugle telling the history of the organization. He said that in February 1990, "a few hundred mountain bikers" gathered together at Michigan State University in East Lansing to discuss issues related to mountain biking and trail care. Paperwork was drawn up to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, a status that the IRS approved the following year.

Continued / The MMBA Celebrates Its 20th Year

The Gold Standard

It didn't take long for the MMBA to become the gold standard of mountain biking advocacy. Other groups look at the successful organization for ideas on starting new groups and improving existing ones. Dwain wrote, "In the early 1990s, the MMBA received one of the very first Mountain Bike Hall of Fame awards through IMBA. The MMBA's businesslike, nonprofit structure served as a model that many other organizations followed and built on throughout the country. In the early 90s, the MMBA leadership was also in demand in surrounding states and even in Canada to direct, inspire, and help jumpstart struggling individuals and organizations to be more effective and financially solvent to meet the needs of trail users and the trails they shared."

Today, the struggles the MMBA faces are the same, yet different. The organization has reached a point where change is necessary. The state board is working hard to provide thorough information for its successors, and to cover its bases from a legal standpoint. The position of Advocacy Director has been created in an effort to maintain awareness of legislation that can endanger the efforts of the organization and its volunteers.

Advocacy Efforts

The MMBA brings together volunteers who are passionate about mountain biking. Some of the volunteers who show up to trail days are taught trail-building techniques as described by the International Mountain Biking Association.



*MMBA members and friends enjoy a group ride on an MMBA-maintained trail.
Photo: Diane Ursu*

These IMBA rules are designed to minimize the effects of erosion on trails so they can exist with minimal repair. Environmental impact is a concern, as well, so trails are designed to keep users on the trail to prevent human impact on the surrounding area.

Some volunteers have taken on the role of trail coordinator in many of Michigan's state and county parks. These volunteers work with the land managers to build trails that are compliant to land manager rules as well as sustainability standards as dictated by the unique terrain of each trail. They work hard to find other volunteers to help with clearing, raking, and benching new trails, as well as maintaining new trails with tasks such as bridge-building, fallen-tree removal, and important reroutes when a trail is deemed unsustainable. Many reroutes are done on trails that were built before the IMBA standards were set.

Twenty years is a pretty impressive run for a recreational advocacy group. The MMBA continues because veteran and green mountain bikers continually come together to protect what they love. So many people from different backgrounds and with different skills find a niche within the organization. Whether it is a chainsaw-yielding trail builder or a computer geek who loves to write, all have important roles within the organization.

Do your part. Help out by checking the Schedule of Events in this issue of the BRB or visit the MMBA web site (<http://www.mmba.org>) for information on upcoming events. Show up. Help out. We would love to see you.



Continued / The MMBA Celebrates Its 20th Year



State Board At-Large Member, Marty Shue, practices using a clinometer at the IMBA Trail School put on by the IMBA Trail Care Crew. Photo: Diane Ursu

“While it's been fine-tuned over the years, the original paradigm of a statewide vision with regional and local application was a stroke of pure genius.”

-Dan Harrison

By Dan Harrison

Looking back, what impresses me about the MMBA in its early years was the way we were able to almost instinctively mold a model grass-roots organization that was internally efficient, outwardly effective, and fun. Whenever I attended conferences, especially IMBA summits, I was constantly asked the secret of our success. I give credit to the founders for starting with a state-wide vision, and growing it into a reality.

So many advocacy movements start as highly-focused groups, in terms of their geographical scope (Friends of Suchandsuch Trail), or their agenda (birdwatchers only, say).

Once those individual entities are in place, it's hard to get them together on a coherent vision, a division of labor, a sharing of resources, a chain of command—essentials for a workable advocacy group, especially one that depends heavily on volunteers.

The fact that we were willing not only to talk to, but get dirty with, anyone with an interest in any non-motorized trail anywhere in Michigan, gave us a lot of opportunities to spread our message and build our partnerships. While it's been fine-tuned over the years, the original paradigm of a statewide vision with regional and local application was a stroke of pure genius.

I also feel that we're lucky in having so much state, county and municipal land in the mix. We've certainly had our issues with every kind of land manager, but the fact that our lines of communication never had to reach farther than Lansing always gave us a fighting chance to have our voice heard, and to build our network.

2010 Annual Meeting & Expo: Wiens, Awards, Gear and Salsa

By Diane Ursu

Even though it was held at Michigan State University, Wolverine fans and other sorts gathered at the Livestock Pavilion for the 2010 Annual Meeting and Expo on January 31. While rabbits were not permitted as per the "No Rabbits" sign on the pavilion door, all others entered the building and were quickly greeted by the smells of nature as well as the friendly merchandise and membership volunteers.

Leadership Presence at the Expo

The State Board members and program coordinators wore blue MMBA shirts to increase their visibility at the expo. The purpose of the shirts was to easily identify state board directors and make them more approachable to the membership. It worked. Members introduced themselves to the directors and shared stories and comments. Event volunteers were also able to find direction more easily.

"Big Scott" Stevenson enjoyed the conversations he had with our Membership Director, Mike Moss, and other MMBA members. "I found the entire expo to be a warm and friendly experience. Chapter members were eager to hear my ideas and answer any questions I had, and I feel [that they] genuinely look forward to seeing me at the trails. Nice to see my enthusiasm to get back on two wheels so well received and welcomed. That's probably the biggest and best thing I took from this event."



Expo visitors found good deals on gear at the expo.

Photo: Diane Ursu

Armadillo Printwear Supports FAFL Awards

First across the Finish Line awards were given to those who volunteered 10 hours of their time to building and maintaining trails. Armadillo Printwear in Berkley donated the FAFL breakfast which consisted of bagels, pastries, and beverages from Panera. FAFL award recipients also received light green t-shirts with the MMBA logo that were printed and donated by Armadillo Printwear as well as messenger bags that were provided by the MMBA.

Missing Food

While there were improvements to this year's expo that pleased many of the members, there were some areas that needed work. One member stated, "I want to help out more directly next year, but I think the two biggest things I noticed were that the layout for getting to the swap meet area was terrible, and the lack of food."

Expo participants were hungry, but many solved that problem by ordering pizza. Kim Moss shared tortilla chips and her tasty, home-made salsa with membership table visitors. Some people snacked on Panera bagels and pastries that remained from the First across the Finish Line (FAFL) breakfast.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Continued / 2010 Annual Meeting & Expo: Wiens, Awards, Gear and Salsa



*Dave Wiens was our guest speaker for the 2010 Annual Meeting and Expo.
Photo: Stani Bohac*

Guest Speaker Dave Wiens

Dave Wiens' presentation was the highlight of the day for many mountain bikers. The presentation room was packed as Wiens regaled them with stories about his life. He talked about the role cycling played in his early years. Biking was simply a mode of transportation while he was growing up and even into his adult years. He recounted the time he asked Ned Overend about training, how he became a pro racer simply by checking the box next to "Pro" on a race form, the time he spent hanging out with Lance Armstrong, and other life experiences.

Wiens spoke of his volunteer trail work in Gunnison, Colorado and showed pictures of amazing trails and rocky cliffs where proposed trails will someday lead mountain bikers through mountainous terrain. He said that we should never look at trail conflicts as battles, because we will never win those battles. Instead, we should form "cooperations," or find ways for user groups and land managers to cooperate. After the presentation, he praised the MMBA for its work.



*MMBA members completely filled the auditorium to hear Dave Wiens speak.
Photo: Diane Ursu*

Perhaps the highlight of the presentation was the moment Wiens shared a photo of him and Lance after a night of socializing and enjoying tasty beverages. It was a self-portrait like so many that are commonly taken in bars and at other social events. The photo presentation consisted of more than 100 photos and gave the audience a glimpse of life from Wiens' point of view.

Wiens was witty, casual and kind. He answered questions from the audience such as, "When are you going to update your blog?" When asked about whether he would do the Iceman, he said that he could possibly do it as early as next year. Someone asked if he was going to do the Leadville 100, again. He replied that with the attention the race has gotten, many more top riders are entertaining the idea of doing the Leadville 100 and he has no plans to continue striving for first place. He said that he is shooting for the top 20 or 25. Still, that is no small feat.

This year's expo was a great success. Many members walked away with excellent auction prizes, discounted cycling equipment, MMBA t-shirts and other items. Many people renewed their memberships and received the coveted stickers. The MMBA even welcomed some new members. Before the close of the expo, volunteers were already planning to make next year's Annual Meeting and Expo even better.

A Precious Spot for Biking

By Gina Iaquinto

I remember my first mountain biking experience as if it were yesterday. It was one of those gorgeous-weathered days, perfect for anything outdoors, set in the Colorado Rockies, and it was absolutely horrifying!

Seeing as I'm a native Michigander, one might ask why I would choose to initially try my hand at this sport while visiting the Rockies. Long story short, as an officer of my university's ski and snowboard club, companies that wanted to book our large group treated me to several adventures as I scouted out Colorado's resorts. Mountain biking was just another one of the adventures on the agenda for the day, and of course I was fearless. Why not try it?!

As a lover of the outdoors and an avid snowboarder of about seven years, I have traveled many places from several resorts out West all the way to the Alps. I was no stranger to barreling down mountains at alarming rates. Mountain biking would be just another thing that I could casually add to my list of "give-your-mother-a-heart-attack" activities; however, on that lovely day, as I excitedly rode up the gondola with my rented bike, I had no idea what I was in for.

I remember that day so well and for so many reasons. The smell of the fresh mountain air coupled with the gorgeous view from the top made me long for a home out west, and I actually began to resent the boringness of Michigan. Colorado was amazing and the feeling of this type of nature around me was bliss! Gazing out over the landscape that day was my last recollection of peace prior to getting on my bike.



The Colorado Rockies offer some hair-raising mountain biking opportunities for the brave. Some have shed tears and cried for Mom in these mountains.

Photo: Diane Ursu

Never having been competitive, I decided to let the other members of my group go ahead of me on the excursion. After a quick tutorial on working the bike, our group leader led us to a small opening in the trees and called back to ask if we were ready. I craned my neck trying to locate the trail beyond the tiny, dirt path before soon realizing, to my horror, that this was the trail. This was not at all what I had pictured.

What had happened to the images I remembered from magazines of smiling people on bikes riding wide-open trails?! As my front wheel inched toward this rocky, dirt path of downhill death, I found myself repeating over and over, "I'm not going to die. I'm not going to die..." Down I went, clutching my brakes for dear life, stiff as a board, eyes wide, as the once-pleasant trees became potential weapons.

That day, I made it about 30 feet on a trail with a bike—60 if you count the walk back up to the trail head. I told the group to go on without me, ditched my bike, and took the two-hour hike down the mountain feeling defeated. It bothered me greatly, as it was not like me to quit in the face of fear; however it seemed that apprehension had gotten the best of me this time. I simply could not stomach the Colorado Rocky Mountains on a bike.

It took me about five years to get over the trauma of my initial impression of mountain biking and to decide that I needed to give it another chance. Nature is where I find true peace, and I needed a warm-weather outdoor adventure sport to hold me over when the slopes were closed. With some guidance from a seasoned friend, I went full force and bought my Gary Fisher with confidence and pride.

Continued / Precious Spot for Biking



Pontiac Lake Recreation Area is proof that fun and exciting mountain biking exists in Michigan.
Photo: Diane Ursu

As the memory of my Colorado experience was still lingering, I wanted to start small and enjoy an easy ride. This time, it was at home in Michigan. Right here in our "boring" state, it was a humble, wide-open beginner trail on the VASA that not only killed my Rockies-induced fear of mountain biking, but sparked a new love for the sport and made me hungry for more.

That summer, I conquered Stony Creek, Island Lake, and Pontiac Lake on several occasions, each time falling more in love with the routes, the beauty of Michigan's nature and the feeling of freedom I felt on my bike. I hardly noticed as the paths through the trees got slimmer, the uphill became more grueling,

and the downhill got steeper and rockier. The feeling of resentment for Michigan that I once had felt in Colorado transformed into an appreciation for the natural offerings of my home. I had grown to love everything about mountain biking on the trails of Michigan.

This biking season will be my third, and I plan to make it my best yet. I am no expert on my bike and still have a lot to learn; however I know that my passion for the outdoors and continuously growing enthusiasm for mountain biking will keep me involved with the sport for as long as my body allows.

Inevitably, I will make it back to that Colorado trail that evoked so much fear in me to kick its butt. I know that when I get there, the beauty of nature will still stand out and will be breathtaking.

I may even find myself longing once again for a home out West, someday. As amazing as the Rockies may be, I will always have a loyal appreciation and precious spot in my heart for the unforgettable and uniquely beautiful Michigan trails that helped me to conquer my fears. These trails helped me to find the true beauty of the sport.

Rescue a Bike from Retirement – A Restoration Project

Article and Photos By: Justin Clark

If you visit the MMBA Forums on a regular basis, you may have seen a thread called, "My dumpster find...Need some info." That find was a Late 70s or early 80s Puch road bike.

I had been looking for an old road bike for a few years, and was having a hard time finding one that fit me. For the most part, all of the bikes that I found were too big for me.

Back in November, I got lucky and found a road bike that was in great shape and was the right size. When I brought it in the house, I began to look it over. I checked for any frame cracks or other signs of fatigue. I was unable to find anything. The next day I took it to KLM, a local bike shop, and asked them to look over all of the parts to make sure everything was still useable.

Being that this would be my first time restoring a bike, I wanted to get a second opinion from the bike shop. Everything checked out pretty well. It just needed to be stripped down and cleaned up. Zach at the local bike shop also suggested that I get myself some Meguiars Cleaner Wax.

I asked Zach if he knew much about the Puch brand of bike, but he did not. I decided to do some research on the Internet and asked my fellow MMBA members for help in finding information on this bike.

I found some information from a guy in Europe. He is friends with a former Puch sales representative and had all of the old Puch catalogs.

He was able to scan copies of the catalog pages and send them to me. I learned that all Puch bikes were hand built. A few things were left off of my bike, like the lugs for the water bottle cage. For the most part, the whole bike had all of its original parts. The front wheel, seat and handlebar tape were replaced and the pedal straps were missing.



I had a lot of fun learning about my bike. Sheldon Brown even wrote about the Puch brand (<http://www.sheldonbrown.com/vrbn-a-f.html>). He gave an excellent history of the company.

I even learned what bike shop sold my bike. There is a chrome sticker on the frame with the bike shop's information. The sticker reads: "Zweirad Fahzeage Georg Peldsuzs 355 Marburg- Pilgrimstein"



An online source said that this bike shop had gone out of business.

After all of that hard work digging through the Internet and sending emails converted from English to German and German to English, I began restoring and cleaning the bike. I found a lot of joy in fixing up this old bike. I have had it out on the road twice and it rides quite well.

If you have never done anything like this before, I suggest you try restoring a bike. It is not that hard to do. If you get stuck along the way, just go down to your local bike shop or ask some of your fellow MMBA members for help. For me, using an old bike that I made road-ready adds to the overall enjoyment of riding, and I'm sure it will do the same for you.

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Corrections

We would like to thank the following corporate sponsor who was not included in the Fall 2009 issue's Corporate Sponsor List:

Macomb Bike and Fitness
Warren, MI
www.macombbike.com

and a Benefactor Member, David J. McCatty.

Thank you for supporting the MMBA!

